THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) and (b) On receipt of request and submission of a detailed report from the State Governments Tourism Development Corporation, this Ministry examines the operational feasibility and financial viability of the proposal. If the proposal is found operationally feasible and financially viable, the Railways may introduce luxury tourist trains on the line of "Palace on Wheels" for promotion of Rail Tourism in collaboration with the State Tourism Development Corporation. However, no such proposal in this regard has been received by this Ministry.

Claims of Mumbai rail blasts

*198. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be please to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that only 174 claims have been finalized at Railway Claims Tribunal, Mumbai of 7/11 Mumbai bomb blasts;

(b) the details of the complaints received and the action by his Ministry in this regard;

(c) whether inspite of Special Bench, work is very slow;

(d) the details of the grievances, representation, etc. received in this regard; and

(e) in how many months, all the cases would be settled?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) As on 14.08.2007, 250 cases have been finaiized.

(b) to (d) With regard to settlement of claims cases, complaints were mainly relating to delay in settlement of claims by Railway Claims Tribunal (RCT).

The following action has been taken by the Government.

(i) The responsibility for filing of claims lies with the claimants. However, Railways have provided all the required guidance and help to the claimants *e.g.* repeated advertisements in the newspapers, personal contacts by railway officials for guidance, opening of a 'Help Centre' at Western Railway Headquarters Office, Churchgate manned by Law assistants for assisting claimants in filing of claims.

(ii) As against sittings for one week in a month by the Railway Claims Tribunal, sittings have been doubled to two weeks per month.

(iii) 2nd Medical Board has also been formed in addition to the one functioning earlier to speed up the medical reports for submission to Railway Claims Tribunal.

Due to the above action, 250 cases have been settled till 14.08.2007.

(e) The proceedings followed by the Special Bench consists of examination, cross examination of evidences etc. as Railway Claims Tribunal is a judicial body. As such no definite time frame can be indicated for finalization of pending cases. However, all concerned departments including the Railway Claims Tribunal are putting in their best efforts to finalize the cases in the least possible time.